

The Appalachian Table – Where Local Food Producers and Buyers Meet

Christie Welch, OSUE Direct Food & Agricultural Marketing Team Leader; Hannah Scott, CFAES Center for Cooperatives Program Manager; Ivory Harlow, CFAES Center for Cooperatives Program Specialist

Objectives: Highlight the diversity of locally produced foods and the variety of market channels available to agricultural producers and food businesses in Appalachian Ohio.

Encourage peer-to-peer learning, make meaningful connections among buyers and producers, and share available resources to help both groups succeed.

Meeting the Needs of Local Food Producers and Buyers

According to Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems: A Report to Congress:

- Producer participation in local food systems is growing, and the value of local food sales, defined as the sale of food for human consumption through both direct-to-consumer (e.g., farmers markets) and intermediated marketing channels (e.g., sales to institutions or regional distributors), appears to be increasing.

According to the USDA Local Food Marketing Practices Survey:

- In 2015, \$8.7 billion dollars of food was sold through direct marketing practices. \$4.8 billion of sales were of raw commodities and \$3.9 billion of sales were of value added commodities.
- Ohio had between \$100 and \$249 million in direct food sales in 2015 with over 7,500 operations that sold food directly making it 4th in the nation in the number of operations with direct food sales.
- Selling directly to consumers (e.g., farmers markets) is the most popular channel for direct food marketing, but sales to institutions or intermediates represent the greatest revenue source for directly marketed food.

Purpose: Help buyers and producers make meaningful connections to fulfill the consumer demand for locally produced foods.

Consumer demand for locally and sustainably produced foods continue to grow. However, many local food producers looking to expand beyond direct-to-consumer markets find it difficult to connect with and navigate market channels including: restaurants, grocers, wholesalers, and institutions. Buyers in these market channels often struggle to identify and connect with producers that meet quantity, quality and regulatory standards suitable for their business.

The Appalachian Table event brings food producers, businesses, and buyers to the table to experience a local foods meal, make meaningful connections, and spark interest in the diversity of products produced in the Appalachian region.

The event provides a forum to share information, learn best practices, and facilitate peer-to-peer learning and networking.

Potential buyers are exposed to a wide variety of locally produced foods from the Appalachian Region of Ohio. The event features an all local foods breakfast including: coffee, baked goods, proteins, dairy, and grains.

Producers have an opportunity to learn how peers are successfully marketing through various channels including major retailers, farm-to-fork restaurants, Community Supported Agriculture programs, and direct-to-consumer markets. During the 2018 event, Sleepy Bee Café's founder, Sandra Gross and Executive Chef, Francis Kroner, shared information with attendees on how they procure locally produced foods for three restaurant locations in the area.

Appalachian region service providers participate to boost awareness of the types of resources available to local food producers for successfully positioning their products in the local foods market.



The Appalachian Table event began with an all locally-sourced breakfast buffet.

Collaborative partner organizations help local food producers and buyers make meaningful connections.

Through the Appalachian Table, Ohio State University Extension Direct Food and Agricultural Marketing Team, the CFAES Center for Cooperatives, The Appalachian Center for Economic Networks, and the Minority Business Assistance Center, producers showcase their products and connect with local food buyers over a local foods breakfast buffet. All are provided education and opportunity for peer-to-peer learning on how to successfully navigate the local food market channels.



Learning through meaningful interaction with local food producers and buyers



Leslie Schaller, founder of Casa Nueva (left) and Sandra Gross, owner and Francis Kroner, Executive Chef of Sleepy Bee Cafes share information on how they incorporate locally produced and purchased foods into their operations.



Peer-to-Peer Education

Producer Panel

A panel of local food producers successfully selling into various market channels shared their experience with attendees. Producers included:

McDowell Farm who market their local pork to regional grocers that focus on natural and sustainably produced foods.

Way Farms who sell their local produce through a local farm market, farmers markets, and a CSA.

Two Roasting Joes who sell locally roasted coffee through farmers markets, cafes, and independent specialty grocers.



Hearing from local food buyers and local food producers already engaged in various market channels helps other buyers and producers see the possibilities of working together to help consumers access local foods.

Meet the Buyers

The Ohio State University Extension Direct Food and Agricultural Marketing Team partners with the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Ohio Proud Program to assist local food buyers and producers make meaningful connections.



How to Get Involved

Do you want to learn more about making connections between local food producers and buyers? Contact the Ohio State University Extension Direct Marketing Team.

Email welch.183@osu.edu.

Bibliography

Low, Sarah A., Aaron Adalja, Elizabeth Beaulieu, Nigel Key, Steve Martinez, Alex Melton, Agnes Perez, Katherine Ralston, Hayden Stewart, Shellye Suttles, Stephen Vogel, and Becca B.R. Jablonski. Trends in U.S. Local and Regional Food Systems, AP-068, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, January 2015.

USDA Census of Agriculture. (2017, June 22). Retrieved March 16, 2018, from 2015 Local Food Marketing Practices Survey: <https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/results/AA8DA0EA-67F6-3672-A576-69153FE07C3C#938CCF2E-B06F-3154-B068-042B7C4CD76B>

